



World Autism Awareness Day

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World Autism Awareness Day is recognized internationally on 2nd of April every year, encouraging Member States of the United Nations to take measures to raise awareness about people with autism throughout the globe. This special day is one of four official health-specific United Nations Days. On this day, individual autism organizations across the world join hands to aid in things like research, diagnosis, treatment, and overall acceptance for those who are affected by this developmental disorder. Autism-friendly events and educational activities take place all month to increase understanding and acceptance and foster worldwide support.

Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) is a complex developmental disability with signs and symptoms that commonly appear during early childhood and affect a person's ability to communicate, impacting interaction with others, thus deeply affecting the overall quality of life. ASD is defined by fixed behavioural indicators that affect individuals differently and to varying degrees. The diagnosis of autism spectrum disorder is applied based on analysis of all behaviours and their severity. Lack of or delay in spoken language, repetitive use of language, poor motor skills, little or absolutely no eye contact, difficulty in carrying on a conversation, difficulty with reasoning and planning, lack of interest in peer relationships are common signs of autism.¹

The aetiology behind ASD is not clearly known. Research and literature suggests that both genetic factors and environment play predominant role in the development of ASD. There is currently no one standard treatment regimen for ASD. There are many ways one can increase their child's ability to grow and learn new skills.

The prevalence of ASD in India, as per reported in various studies ranges from 0.15% to 1.01%.^{2,3} Even though there has been a vast increase in the number of cases being detected, majority of people with autism in India, especially adults, still remain undiagnosed,

and do not receive the .Treatment options include behavior and communication therapies, training of skills, and medicines like anti-psychotics, anti-depressants and mood stabilizers to control symptoms.(4,5) Better results can be expected if these are started on an early basis. Increased awareness and early diagnosis/intervention and access to appropriate services and support lead to significantly improved outcomes.

REFERENCES

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